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Tobacco Production And Marketing

In West Virginia

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Tobacco Production and Marketing in West Virginia

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TOBACCO is grown and harvested in 35 counties in West Virginia. In 1954* (the most recent data available) tobacco was produced on 2,837 acres by 3,352 farmers who sold 4,116,145 pounds. The average tobacco acreage was .84 acres and the average production was 1,228 pounds per farm.

Description of the Sample

Farms

This study of tobacco production and marketing was confined to Cabell, Lincoln, Mason, Putnam, and Wayne counties, the five counties in the southwestern part of the State where the production is the most concentrated. In 1954, these counties accounted for 87 per cent of the total State acreage, 82 per cent of all the growers, and 86 per cent of the total State production.

The sample consisted of 294 tobacco growers. It included all growers with allotments of two or more acres, 20 per cent of those with allotments of one to two acres, and 10 per cent of those with allotments of less than one acre.

The tobacco-growing farms included in the sample tended to be larger than the average for all farms in the area. They averaged 164 total acres and 33 acres of cropland per farm, whereas the 1954 average for all farms in the area was 82.5 total acres and 23.5 acres of cropland per farm.

Cropland constituted 20 per cent of the total land operated by the growers in the sample, but only 3.5 per cent of this cropland was devoted to tobacco production. In 1959, the year of the study, 55.4 per cent of the growers in the sample had tobacco acreage allotments of less than one acre, and only one grower among the 294 visited had an allotment as large as four acres. The records of the Production Adjustment Branch of the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation

*1954 Census.

Service show that in 1959 the growers visited had an aggregate allotment of 318.23 acres, an average of 1.07 acres per allotment. Some growers, however, rented allotted acres from others and thus increased the area on which they could grow the crop. The allotment for the growers visited in Lincoln County was the highest for any of the five counties, being 1.2 acres per allotment.

Tobacco was not grown on all of the allotted acres. The growers visited produced tobacco on only 307.72 acres or 96.7 per cent of the total allotment.

The P.A. records also indicate that the total production of the growers in the sample amounted to 499,744 pounds, an average of 1,624 pounds per acre. The growers sampled in Putnam County averaged the highest production per acre, 1,768 pounds; those in Wayne County averaged the lowest, only 964 pounds.

It is not often that one has the opportunity to check farmers' reports of production against actual records. These same growers, when interviewed, reported that they had grown tobacco on 340.99 acres and had produced 521,462 pounds. They overstated their acreage by 11 per cent and their production by 10 per cent.

Half of the growers produced less than 1,600 pounds per farm; 23 per cent produced less than 1,000 pounds; and only five (1.7 per cent) produced as much as 3,400 pounds or more.

Importance of the Tobacco Enterprise

On an acre basis, tobacco production is a small-scale operation in the area, but it is not necessarily confined to the smaller farms and it is an important enterprise for those engaged in it. Almost 16 per cent of the tobacco growers did no other farming. A little more than

TABLE 1. Acreage Distribution of 1959 Tobacco Allotment of Growers in Sample.

Acres	Number of Farms	Per Cent of Total
0.1 and under 0.5	27	9.2
0.5 and under 1.0	136	46.2
1.0 and under 1.5	61	20.7
1.5 and under 2.0	27	9.2
2.0 and under 2.5	24	8.2
2.5 and under 3.0	12	4.1
3.0 and under 3.5	4	1.4
3.5 and under 4.0	2	0.7
4.0 and over	1	0.3

46 per cent received more than 90 per cent of their farm income from the sale of tobacco; and 76 per cent received one-half or more from tobacco sales.

A little more than one-half (52 per cent) of the farmers growing tobacco obtained from 75 to 100 per cent of their total income from some type of farming, but more than one-fifth (22 per cent) received less than one-fourth of their total income from the farm. In Lincoln County, however, 60 per cent of the farmers included in the sample obtained 75 per cent, or more, of their income from farming.

Growing tobacco was a part-time operation for many of the growers included in the sample. Almost 45 per cent worked off the farm for an average of 216 days. The most common work was in private industry and manufacturing, where 16 per cent of the growers found off-farm employment. The next most important source of employment (14.2 per cent) was in government, roads, schools, etc. Next in importance were business, service work, self-employment, and farm work for others.

Rental Arrangements

A considerable proportion of the growers, 45.9 per cent, rented tobacco acreage. There was a variety of rental arrangements but the most common (26.5 per cent) stipulated that one-third of the crop went to the owner of the land. Only 4.8 per cent paid cash rent.

Experience in Growing

Farmers in the area have had much experience in growing tobacco. Almost half of them, 41 per cent, had grown tobacco for 30 years or more, and 13 per cent for 50 years or more. There were, however, several relatively new tobacco growers, 22.8 per cent having been in the business for less than 10 years. Inexperienced growers were most frequent in Putnam (34 per cent) and least frequent in Lincoln County (15 per cent).

Cultural Practices

The Use of Cover Crops

More than 80 per cent of the growers set tobacco on land where cover crops had been newly plowed under. Almost half, 48.6 per cent, used vetch for the cover crop and another 20 per cent used vetch mixed with oats, wheat, or some other small grain. Others used a combination of vetch and clover, and others used clover, a small grain, or sod as the cover crop.

Cover crops, especially vetch, were used most often in Lincoln County where the practice was followed by 91.1 per cent of the growers, 72 per cent of whom used vetch. The use of a cover crop was least common in Putnam and Mason counties where more than one-fourth of the tobacco growers used no cover crop.

If the use of a cover crop is desirable, there are indications that growers did not do as good a job in 1959 as they had done in 1950. In 1950, only 10.2 per cent failed to use a cover crop, but in 1959, 18.4 per cent did not use one.

Fertilizer Practices

Growers used an average of 1,558 pounds of mixed fertilizer, 36 pounds of straight fertilizer, and 7.6 tons of manure per acre.

Data in Table 2 show that the amounts of fertilizer used varied over a wide range—from less than 1,000 pounds of mixed fertilizer used by 14 per cent of the growers, to the 2,800 pounds or more used by 3 per cent. In addition to mixed fertilizer, most growers, 75 per cent, used manure, but only 13 per cent also used some unmixed fertilizer.

Effects of Use of Fertilizer

All but 3 per cent of the growers said that the price of tobacco was favorably affected by the use of fertilizer. Almost three-fourths said that its use resulted in tobacco of better quality, and 36 per cent said that its use increased the weight of tobacco from an acre. They said that the improvement in quality affected the price directly, and that returns per acre were further increased by the added weight.

A large majority of the growers, 88 per cent, reported that they had experienced no difficulty in the use of fertilizer; but 7.8 per cent

TABLE 2. Percentage of Growers Using Indicated Amounts of Mixed Fertilizer Per Acre.

Pounds Mixed Fertilizer Per Acre	Percentage of Growers
Under 1,000	14
1,000 under 1,200	19
1,200 under 1,400	10
1,400 under 1,600	11
1,600 under 1,800	14
1,800 under 2,000	7
2,000 under 2,200	15
2,200 under 2,400	3
2,400 under 2,600	3
2,600 under 2,800	1
2,800 and over	3

said that fertilizer had burned tobacco, and 1.4 per cent claimed that its use retarded maturity of the crop.

Problems in Tobacco Production

When queried about their chief problems in tobacco production, 5.2 per cent of the growers said that they had no major problems, but the others listed a variety of problems. In rank of importance, 15.6 per cent listed plant diseases; 10.2 per cent named inability to obtain good plants; and 5.1 per cent listed unfavorable weather. Others mentioned small allotments, difficulties in obtaining labor, poor soil, cut worms, lack of housing for the crop, and burning of tobacco within the tobacco barn.

Effect of Production Practices on Price

Nearly all of the growers, 90.5 per cent, thought that they were producing better quality tobacco now than formerly. The majority, 74 per cent, attributed this to the improved fertility practices followed in recent years; one-fifth said that it was caused by better care, and 14 per cent named improved varieties as the cause. A few named better curing and better spacing of plants.

In addition to the growers' opinions about the effect of the use of fertilizer on the price of tobacco, their opinions were sought about the effects of other production practices on price. Almost 80 per cent said that the type of tobacco plants used affects the price for the tobacco, and 88 per cent said that the spacing of plants also affects price.

They gave a variety of reasons for thinking that the type of plants affected the selling price of the tobacco. More than one-fifth (22.4 per cent) said that strong, squatty, plants start growth quickly and mature rapidly, thus affecting the selling price. A few, 6.1 per cent, thought that "better" varieties produce better tobacco, and therefore bring a higher selling price. Other answers covered a wide variety of reasons, many of which do not appear to be pertinent.

Spacing of Plant

Almost one-third of the growers, 32.7 per cent, said that closer spacing gives a finer textured, lighter leaf; and 27.9 per cent indicated that the wider spacing gives more weight per acre.

There was no great amount of uniformity among growers in respect to spacing of plants between rows. The largest group, 41.8 per cent, used 35 inches of space between rows; 4.8 per cent used as little as 30 inches; 38.1 per cent as much as 42 inches; and 3.4 per cent as much

as 48 inches. There was even less uniformity in the matter of spacing plants within the row. The range was from 10 to 24 inches. The largest group, 37.2 per cent of the total, used an 18-inch space within the row; 16 per cent of the total used 16 inches; 13.6 per cent used 14 inches; 2 per cent, 10 inches; and 3.7 per cent used 24 inches.

Cultivation

There was variation also in frequency of cultivation, ranging from 1 to 7 times per crop. A little more than one-half of the growers, 51 per cent, cultivated 3 times, and 30 per cent cultivated 4 times. Cultivating usually was practiced for one or both of two reasons: to control weeds, the reason given by 73.5 per cent of the growers; or to conserve moisture, the reason given by 68.7 per cent.

Suckering

Almost all of the growers suckered their tobacco by hand. Three did not sucker, but the others suckered from 1 to 5 times. Nineteen per cent of the growers suckered once; 39.8 per cent suckered twice; 25.2 per cent suckered three times; 11.6 per cent, four times; and 3.1 per cent, five times.

The growers seemed fairly evenly divided in the practice of leaving two top suckers; with 55.5 per cent leaving them. None of the growers, except the University Experimental Farm, and then only on experimental plots, used chemicals for sucker control.

Time of Cutting

More than one-half (59.8 per cent) of the growers did not cut their tobacco until it was thoroughly ripe, but 3.1 per cent said that it was green when they cut it. In Putnam County a smaller percentage (52.1 per cent), than in other counties cut their tobacco when it was ripe, but a larger percentage (40.9 per cent) cut it partly ripe and 7 per cent cut it green.

Almost all the growers (96.2 per cent) said that the stage of ripeness at which tobacco is cut affects its price, and 94 per cent thought that ripeness increases the price.

Housing

Housing the tobacco immediately after cutting is the most commonly followed practice (62.6 per cent); but 28 per cent of the growers waited a few hours before housing, and 2.7 per cent waited one day. Occasionally a farmer waited two and three days. Only 1.7 per cent of the growers put the newly-cut tobacco on scaffolding in the field.

In spite of the variation in time of housing, 89.8 per cent of the growers said they thought that the length of time between cutting and housing affected the selling price. Almost half of them, 42.9 per cent, said that housing immediately after cutting prevents sunburning of the tobacco and thus results in a higher price. Almost one-fifth, 19.4 per cent, said that this practice often prevents water damage and thus improves the price. Others, in smaller numbers, suggested that prompt housing results in less wilt and bruising, cleaner tobacco, and better curing.

Of the 28 per cent of the growers who waited a few hours after cutting before housing, 21.4 per cent said that this practice permitted the tobacco to wilt, thus causing less bruising and a higher price.

Most of those who waited longer than a few hours after cutting to house the tobacco thought that the length of time between cutting and housing had little, if any, effect on the selling price.

Tobacco Barns and Stripping Sheds

A few of the growers, 14.3 per cent, had more than one tobacco barn; 42.2 per cent had only one barn; and 43.5 per cent used a combination barn for curing the crop. Only 17 per cent had special stripping sheds. In Cabell and Mason counties, growers had stripping sheds more often than in the other counties; in Lincoln County, less often than in other counties.

Curing

Heat was not used in curing by 94.6 per cent of the growers, but 51.7 per cent reported that they had had trouble with "house burning." Only a small number, 10.5 per cent, have made changes in the length of their curing period in recent years. A few, 2.7 per cent, have spaced the tie rails further apart and have removed bottom rails; and 2.4 per cent have used heat for curing. A few others reported a variety of changes in their curing methods.

Stripping Practices and Procedures

Most of the growers, 83 per cent, completed all stripping before they started selling their tobacco. There was some variation in this respect, however. The percentages of growers who completed stripping ranged from 70.7 in Mason County to 91.1 in Cabell County.

Some 13.6 per cent of the growers said that weather did not affect the time when their stripping was done, but 86.1 per cent said that they stripped only when the weather was favorable.

A very few, 2 per cent, named off-farm work as a factor affecting their time of stripping; 4.8 per cent named "other" farm work; 2.7 per cent named ability to get labor; and 3.7 per cent length of daylight.

Most of the growers, 73.8 per cent, did not hire labor for stripping tobacco. Of those who hired labor for stripping, practically all said that they did it because it enabled them to sell earlier.

Labor hired for stripping was usually paid by the day. The most common rate of pay was $5.00, but the rate ranged from $3.00 to $7.00 per day. Fifty cents per hour was the most common hourly rate.

Two-thirds (66.7 per cent) of the growers said that labor for stripping was not readily available. Almost half, 48.6 per cent, of the growers used only two persons in the stripping crew; some (19.1 per cent), however, used a three-person crew, and 15.3 per cent used a four-man crew. Most of the growers thought that they were using the number of persons that provided maximum efficiency in their stripping operations, although several thought that the addition of a worker or two would improve their efficiency in stripping.

The time when stripping was completed varied. Almost one-fourth (24.5 per cent) of the growers reported that they had completed the stripping operation by November 30; 12.6 per cent by about December 15; and 23.6 per cent by Christmas time. Growers in Cabell County generally completed stripping earlier than growers in the other counties. Eighty-five per cent of the growers said that more than three-fourths of the stripping was done by family labor, and only 3.4 per cent said that none was done by family labor.

Stripping can be a long drawn-out job for some growers. The time required for stripping ranged from 5 days for 14 per cent of the growers to 50 days for 1 per cent; 65.4 per cent had the stripping done within 15 days, and 89.5 per cent within 30 days after harvest.

Grades

The growers were queried about changes in the number of grades of tobacco. Three-fourths (76.2 per cent) said that there are fewer grades of tobacco than formerly.

When growers were queried about the reason for fewer grades, 29.6 per cent said that tobacco was more uniform now than formerly; 28.2 per cent said that manufacturers, buyers, and "agricultural" people want it that way. A few others gave various reasons such as "tobacco sells better with fewer grades"; "more tobacco goes into filter cigarettes and, therefore, fewer grades needed"; and that at present "tobacco is not graded as to length of leaf."

Use of Press

Except in Cabell County, fewer than one-third of the growers used a tobacco press, but in Cabell, 73.2 per cent used a press. Altogether, 102 of the growers in the sample used a press, but there was little uniformity as to how long the tobacco was left in the press. The time ranged from less than five minutes to more than one hour.

Bulking

All but three of the growers bulked the tobacco after stripping. Among the great variety of reasons mentioned for bulking, some gave more than one. Most of the growers, 81.3 per cent, said that they bulked because the tobacco would then stay in better case; but 25.5 per cent said that bulking improves the appearance of the tobacco; 22.8 per cent said that bulking improves color retention, and 11.9 per cent said that it is easier to handle bulked than unbulked tobacco. Other reasons mentioned by a few growers were: the tobacco retains its weight; the practice saves housing room; and bulking makes it easier to keep the various grades straight.

Source of Sticks and Stick Grading

Most of the growers, 92.8 per cent, obtained their tobacco sticks from their farm. There was no general agreement about where and when to stick-grade tobacco. One-fourth, 25.5 per cent, of the growers stick-graded their tobacco at the auction warehouse, while the majority, 65.0 per cent, stick-graded when loading from the tobacco barn.

Marketing

Choice of Market

The majority of the growers, 70.4 per cent, made only one delivery to the auction market, 21.4 per cent made two deliveries, and 6.8 per cent made as many as three deliveries.

Most of the growers, 65.3 per cent, owned the truck on which the tobacco was transported to market, but 8.5 per cent used the truck of a neighbor, and 26.2 per cent hired a truck.

Only six, 2.0 per cent, of the growers had ever sold their tobacco on a market other than in Huntington, West Virginia.

Choice of Auction Warehouse Services

In 1959, there were two tobacco warehouses in Huntington in which auction sales were held. Both warehouses were under the same management, but sales were held on different days. A little more than half, 54.4 per cent, of the growers sold their 1959 crop in what is called the "old"

warehouse; 32.7 per cent sold in the "new" warehouse, and 10.2 per cent sold in both warehouses.

The warehouse management appears to give little attention to soliciting tobacco for sale. A visit by a representative of the tobacco warehouse appears to be a rarity. Only 2.7 per cent of the growers reported such a visit in 1959, and only 10.2 per cent said that a warehouse representative had ever visited them. Only 2.7 per cent of the growers reported that warehouse representatives had solicited tobacco at the market.

Only one of the growers interviewed, 0.3 per cent of the sample, had any investment in a tobacco warehouse.

Warehouse Service and Costs

The warehousemen rendered very few services. They had assisted 13 per cent of the growers with grading, had provided 1.0 per cent with storage space, and had furnished tobacco seed to 1.0 per cent.

The growers were almost unanimous, 98 per cent, in their liking of the auction method of selling tobacco. Only three, 1.0 per cent, indicated that they did not like selling at action.

Most of the growers, 83 per cent, were at the warehouse when their tobacco was delivered, and they had supervised unloading.

The warehousemen kept tobacco groups separate for 85 per cent of the growers, but groups were thrown together for 14 per cent.

Some tobacco growers did not appear to be well-informed about selling charges. Almost 28 per cent said that auction rates varied from year to year, and 22.4 per cent said that they varied during a particular season. The others said that the rates did not vary from year to year nor during the season.

Preference of Selling Time

Many of the growers, 60.2 per cent, expressed a preference for selling during the first week of the market, but 20.8 per cent preferred the second and third week. The others, except for the 6.8 per cent who had no preference, preferred to sell immediately before or after Christmas. Half, 50.4 per cent, of the growers said that they were sucessful in 1959 in selling at the time of their preference but only 15 (5.1 per cent) had booked delivery in advance.

A quick unload appeared to be important to growers, most of whom, 85.4 per cent, said that they delivered to the warehouse which gave the quickest unload. Only one of the growers interviewed said that he usually holds back some grades of his tobacco until he "sees

how the market is going," and only four, 1.4 per cent, "try out" the market.

A few more than half, 54.8 per cent, of the growers said that they usually were present when their tobacco was sold; more than half, 61.9 per cent, said that they had been previously advised as to time of sale, but only 40.5 per cent said that they had requested such notification.

Movement to Market

About one-fourth, 24.8 per cent, of the growers sold their 1959 crop during the first week of the sales. In Cabell, Lincoln, and Wayne counties about 37 per cent of the growers sold during the first sale week, but only 8.6 per cent in Mason and 11.8 per cent of those in Putman sold during this period. In both Mason and Putman counties sales picked up as the sales season progressed. By the end of the third week of sales, 54.4 per cent of the growers included in the sample had sold their tobacco, and by mid-season, 71 per cent had sold.

Reasons for Preferred Selling Time

When those growers, 60.2 per cent, who expressed a preference for selling during the first week of the market were asked why they held this preference, 82.6 per cent said that the price was better during the first week of sales, and 9.6 per cent said that first-week sales took tobacco off their hands early.

Of those growers, 20.8 per cent of the total, who said that they preferred to sell during the second or third week of sales, about three-fourths said that their preference was formed because they thought that the price was higher during this period. One-eighth said that selling at this time permitted them to get the tobacco off their hands early in the season, and 3.8 per cent said that they were following custom in selling at this time. Others gave various other reasons. It is interesting to note that those preferring to sell in the two periods gave practically the same reasons for their preferences.

Seven per cent of the growers said that they preferred to sell the week before Christmas. Sixty-one (61.3 per cent) of those expressing this preference said that they preferred this time because the price was better, 12.9 per cent said that they could not get their tobacco ready for market earlier than this, and the remainder had other reasons.

Four per cent of the growers said that they had no preference about time of sale, and 2 per cent said that they preferred to sell the first week after Christmas. Almost half of the latter group said that they received a better price a week after Christmas, and 29 per cent expressing this preference said that they could not get the tobacco ready for market any earlier.

Success in Selling at Preferred Time

One-half (50.4 per cent) of the growers said that they had been successful in selling at their preferred time, 7.8 per cent said they had been only partly successful, and 41.8 per cent said that they had not succeeded in selling at their preferred time. Only 5.1 per cent of the growers "booked" or made arrangements in advance for delivering the tobacco at a stated time. Of those "booking," 15 altogether, 13 per cent said that if a grower failed to deliver tobacco when "booked" he was put at the end of the line, one-third mentioned a variety of other penalties, and about one-half said that warehousemen applied no penalty for failure to deliver at the time "booked." Apparently "booking" is of little importance to the Huntington tobacco market, even though 80 per cent of the growers who had "booked" said that they had had no difficulties in respect to the practice.

Services Requested of Warehouse

The growers were asked about any special advantages they sought in order to have the most favorable sales conditions. Most of them (86.7 per cent) said that they had not sought any special advantage in sales conditions, but 7.5 per cent said that they sought places of favorable lighting, 4.8 per cent sought certain floors in the warehouse or certain positions on the floor, and 1.7 per cent named a variety of other special advantages which they sought.

Most of the growers, 90.2 per cent, did not request any specific services from the warehousemen, but 7.1 per cent said they had requested aid in grading and basket packing.

Testing the Market

The growers were queried about their methods of "testing" the market. There was little "testing" before delivering the tobacco to the warehouse. Only one grower said that he had held back some grades from the market, and only four (1.4 per cent) said that they had "tried-out" the market.

Growers Attendance at Sale

More than half of the growers, 54.8 per cent, were present at the auction when their tobacco was sold. More than half of the growers, 61.9 per cent, said that they had been previously advised by the warehouse about the time of sale. Only 35.7 per cent of the growers in Cabell and 37.5 per cent in Wayne, the counties closest to the market, had been advised of time of sale.

Only 40.5 per cent of the growers said that they had requested notification of time of sale of their tobacco. In those counties nearest to market, only 10 per cent of the growers in Cabell and 25 per cent in Wayne had requested notification of time of sale.

More than half of the growers sold their 1959 tobacco during the first three weeks of the sale, 24.8 per cent sold during the first week, and 29.6 per cent during the second and third weeks. Only 5.8 per cent of the growers said that they had sold their crop late in the marketing season. The time of their sale did not correspond very well with their expressed preferences for time.

Answers were not satisfactory about the time of day in which tobacco was sold. Forty-five per cent of the growers said that they did not know the time of day of sale; but 38 per cent said their tobacco had been sold in the forenoon, and 13 per cent that it had been sold in the afternoon.

Changes in Time of Sale and Reasons

Many growers, 62.2 per cent, reported that in recent years they were selling their tobacco earlier than formerly. The principal reason, noted by 23.8 per cent of the growers, was that the market opened earlier than formerly. The second reason in importance, given by 20.4 per cent of the growers, was that they could get their crop ready for market earlier than formerly; other, more infrequent reasons were: "grow less tobacco" (6.5 per cent), "better price" (9.2 per cent), "get tobacco off hands" (1.7 per cent), "beat bad weather" (.7 per cent), and "no particular reason" (3.4 per cent).

Almost half of the growers, 49 per cent, said that loss in quality by keeping tobacco on the farm encouraged early delivery; 38 per cent said that their need for cash encouraged early delivery; and 35 per cent said that danger of loss from theft and fire encouraged early delivery.

Credit did not appear to be a strong factor in the urge to sell early. Only 7.2 per cent of the growers indicated that creditors encouraged early selling.

A little better than half of the growers (53.4 per cent) said that the size of their crop had no effect on their date of marketing; 36.1 per cent said that a larger crop delayed marketing; and 7.1 per cent said that a smaller crop enabled them to market earlier.

Less than one-third (30.6 per cent) of the growers said that they watched changes in market prices to help determine when to sell their crop. Most growers (86.1 per cent) thought that tobacco prices declined towards the end of the marketing season. When asked about reasons for this price decline, 35.4 per cent named poor tobacco coming on the

market at the end of the season; 54.8 per cent said that buyers had filled quotas, stocked-up or had withdrawn from the market. Some of the growers gave more than one reason for thinking that prices declined toward the end of the season.

Half of the growers said that they thought that there was stronger competition between the buyers early in the marketing season than later on.

Almost one-third (31.3 per cent) of the growers said that early selling rushed preparation for market too much, but only 3.4 per cent said that good curing and good grading were sacrificed. On the other hand, 62.6 per cent thought that the quality of tobacco depreciated while hanging in the barn, and 9.9 per cent thought that it depreciated while stored in bulk.

In a few instances, only 5 per cent, the landlords sold the tenants' tobacco. The principal reason for this practice was that the landlord held the marketing card.

Rejection of Auction Bids

Only a few of the growers, 14.3 per cent, had rejected first auction bids on their tobacco. Of those who had rejected bids, only 7.1 per cent had been advised by the warehousemen to do so. Seldom were the rejections only 9.5 per cent, on the entire crop. Ninety per cent of the rejections were on single baskets only. In the case of 78.5 per cent of the rejections, growers said that they had received higher prices after their rejections. Only 11.9 per cent of those who had rejected bids reported an extra charge for re-sale; and 64.3 per cent said their baskets had been repacked after the bid rejection.

Some growers had thought of rejecting bid price, but had decided against rejection because they thought that the bid was only slightly under the correct price, and a few others thought that to reject would delay selling too long.

Growers' Idea of a 'Good Sale'

An effort was made to learn from the growers their ideas of a "good sale." A majority described a "good sale" as an average price of 60 to 69 cents a pound; 9.9 per cent said that a "good sale" was an average price of 70 to 79 cents; 5 per cent named an average price of 80 cents to $1.00; 5 per cent named $1.00 and more, and 5 per cent thought that an average price of 50 to 59 cents was a "good sale." Evidently there was little agreement about what constitutes a "good sale."

Growers' Attitude Toward Selling Practices

Growers were queried about their interest in an average price for all tobacco of the same grade and quality. A large majority (82 per cent) said that they preferred the risk of getting a higher price through auction. Only 15 per cent indicated an interest in selling at an average grade and quality price.

Opinions of the growers about the merits of a fast or slow sale were sought. Opinions were divided: 26.6 per cent thought that a fast sale brought a better price, and 21.4 per cent thought that a slow sale was best. To 13.6 per cent, speed of sale made no difference, and 25 per cent said that present sales movements were satisfactory.

Several growers said that they had observed changes in selling practices in recent years—18.7 per cent said sales were earlier; 2.4 per cent thought that there were fewer tobacco grades; 8.8 per cent mentioned a variety of changes. However, 68.4 per cent said that they had observed no changes in farmers' selling practices in recent years.

The majority of the growers, 82.3 per cent, said that, while selling, they had not undergone any discrimination from warehousemen; 12.9 per cent said that some growers were favored in the matter of unloading; 8.5 per cent said that some growers were favored as to location on the floor; and 1 per cent said that "pinhookers" got better prices.

In response to the question, What may farmers do to secure a better price for tobacco?, 20.7 per cent said that they could raise better tobacco; 30.3 per cent said that they could be more careful in preparing the crop for market; 3.7 per cent said that the growers could form a union or cooperative; 3.7 per cent said that nothing could be done; 10.2 per cent mentioned a variety of things; and 38.1 per cent did not express an opinion.

Only 3.7 per cent said that they had heard complaints from tobacco buyers. Most of these complaints were that the tobacco was in too high case, was too green, or was poorly graded.

Use of Market News Service

The growers indicated a very high regard for the Market News Reports, with 84.7 per cent considering the reports accurate. Most of the growers, 84 per cent, thought that the Market News Service was adequate. A few, 2.0 per cent, said that the reports were incomplete; 1.4 per cent said that the reports should contain more on-the-spot information; and 1.0 per cent considered the service inadequate.

Only 17.3 per cent of the growers said that the Market News Reports had influenced their time of delivery to market and had caused them to put their tobacco on the market when the price was reported up.

Federal-Grade price reports were available to 70.4 per cent of the growers; 44.2 per cent said that they had used the reports, and 34.7 per cent said that the reports had been helpful. The information on prices and supports was held to be the most useful part of the reports, with information on grading being ranked second.

Grading Service

Grading demonstrations had been attended by less than half, 48.3 per cent, of the growers. Only a few, 8.2 per cent, of the growers expressed criticism of the Federal Grading Service. The principal criticism (by 3.7 per cent of the growers) was that the grading was not always accurate. A few growers, 1.4 per cent, said that it was not thorough; 1.4 per cent said that there were too few grades; and 0.3 per cent said that there were too many grades.

When asked for suggestions for improving the grading service, 2.0 per cent said that there was need for more experience on the part of graders; 2.7 per cent said that they needed more information about grading and more grading demonstrations. Only 6.4 per cent of the growers gave suggestions for improving the grading service, and even fewer gave suggestions for improving the Market News and Crop Reports. A few, 2 per cent, said that more "on-the-spot" information would improve the service, but most of the growers, 97 per cent, had no suggestions to offer.

Sources of Information on Production and Marketing

Growers used many sources to obtain information about the production and market outlook for tobacco. Many obtained information from more than one source.

More growers, 83.7 per cent, obtained information from radio than from any other source; 71.1 per cent listed television as a source; 65 per cent, newspapers; 47.3 per cent, neighbors; 14.6 per cent, Agricultural Extension Service; 12.9 per cent, meetings; 6.5 per cent, magazines; and 11.2 per cent named a variety of other sources.

Almost half, 49 per cent, of the growers said that they had attended meetings at which tobacco was the principal subject, but only 22 per cent had attended meetings about marketing tobacco. Many growers, 65.3 per cent, said that they would be interested in attending meetings pertaining to tobacco marketing.

An effort to learn what growers thought about the use of chemicals for sucker control was not fruitful. Only 1.7 per cent thought that it was good practice to use chemicals for this purpose. The others either had not used chemicals for suckering or had no opinion about their use.

Cigarette manufacturers sometimes request that the quantity of nitrogen used in growing tobacco be limited. Growers were asked what they thought about the use of nitrogen. About half of them (51.4 per cent) thought that it was proper to use it in limited quantities; 7.5 per cent said that it should not be used at all; and 5.1 per cent thought that it was proper to use it in any amount. The other growers either had no opinion on the matter or gave a wide variety of answers.

The growers were asked to describe what they considered "quality" tobacco. "Bright yellow, golden leaf, bright color" was the description given by 45.6 per cent of them; "bright colored, fine textured leaf" was the description of 21.1 per cent; 10.9 per cent said "fine textured leaf"; 2 per cent, "thoroughly ripe, well-cured"; 19.4 per cent gave a variety of other descriptions; and 2 per cent gave no answers.

Growers were rather confident of their ability to judge quality tobacco, 87.8 per cent contending that they could predict which type (quality) of tobacco would sell at the highest price on the auction floor.

Sale Outside of Auction

Only 18.7 per cent of the growers said that they had ever sold to a "pinhooker." A variety of reasons were given for selling to pinhookers. The most common reason, "good price offered" was cited by 11.9 per cent of the growers; "hard to get crop to market" was cited by 2 per cent of the growers; "poor or damaged tobacco" by 1.4 per cent of the growers and .7 per cent said that, at the time of sale, they "didn't know any better."

Most of the growers, 75.2 per cent, had no criticism of the operations of the pinhookers, but 8.8 per cent said that pinhookers should not be permitted to operate on the market; 7.8 per cent said that pinhookers tried to cheat the farmers; 3.4 per cent said that the pinhooker gets a better price on the market than the farmer does; 1.4 per cent said that the operations of the pinhooker hurts the market price.

Selling to pinhookers appears to be decreasing. Of the growers who had sold to pinhookers, only 36.4 per cent had sold after 1950. Only 1 per cent of the growers had ever sold to a leaf dealer, and barn selling has not been practiced in the area for several years.

Seventy growers hired trucks to haul their tobacco to market. The others either used their own trucks or had the tobacco hauled to market at no charge by neighbors.

Except in Cabell and Mason counties, the cost of truck hire was $1.00 per cwt., apparently irrespective of mileage. In Cabell County,

and in a few cases in Mason County, the charge was by the load, the charge varying from $5.00 to $20.00, but on a hundred-weight basis, the charge amounted to about $1.16 per cwt.

All but five of the growers accompanied the truck to market. The hiring of a truck, therefore, did not give growers additional time for farm or other work.

Only six of the growers had to pay the truckers extra compensation for delay in unloading. The extra pay usually was compensation for added meals and lodging. One grower, who had only 197 pounds of tobacco, reported that it cost him an extra $25.00 for a three-day truck layover. This was the only case of this kind reported.